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(54) **HIERARCHICAL SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR PERFORMING STORAGE OPERATIONS IN A COMPUTER NETWORK**

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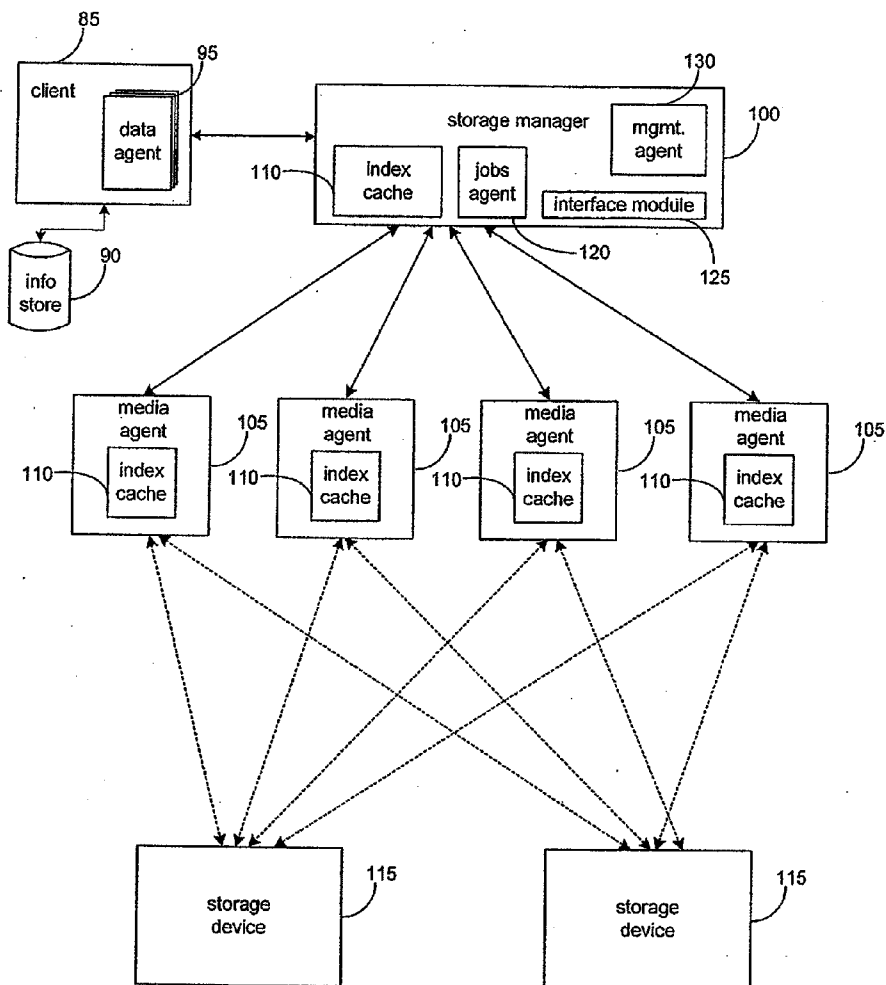
(57) **ABSTRACT**

(22) Filed: **Jan. 23, 2012**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

(63) Continuation of application No. 12/820,533, filed on Jun. 22, 2010, now Pat. No. 8,103,829, which is a continuation of application No. 12/271,677, filed on Nov. 14, 2008, now Pat. No. 7,757,043, which is a continuation of application No. 10/877,831, filed on Jun. 25, 2004, now Pat. No. 7,454,569.

A system for performing storage operations using hierarchically configured storage operation cells. The system includes a first storage manager component and a first storage operation cell. The first storage operation cell has a second storage manager component directed to performing storage operations in the first storage operation cell. Moreover, the first storage manager component is programmed to instruct the second storage manager regarding performance of storage operations in the first storage operation cell.



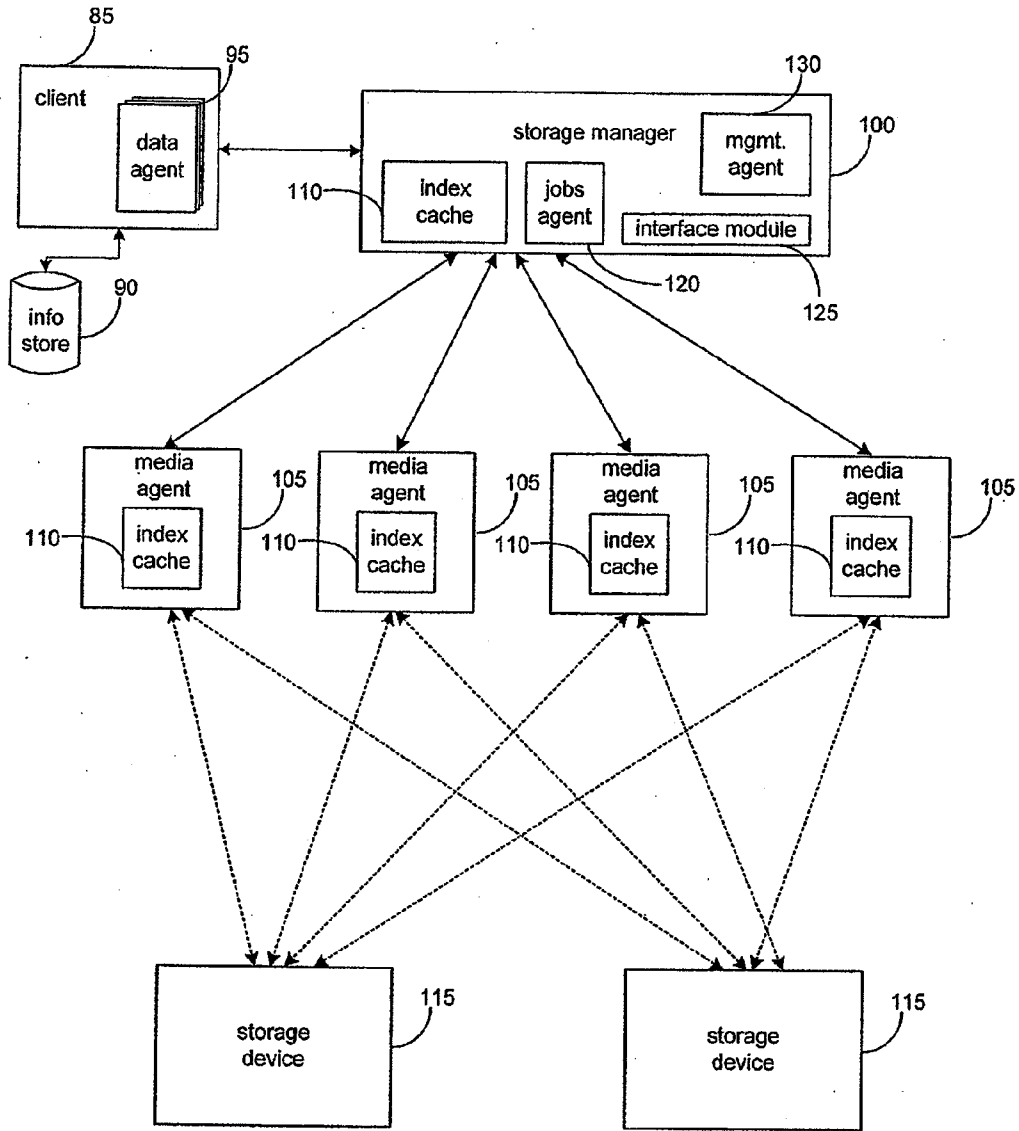


Fig. 1

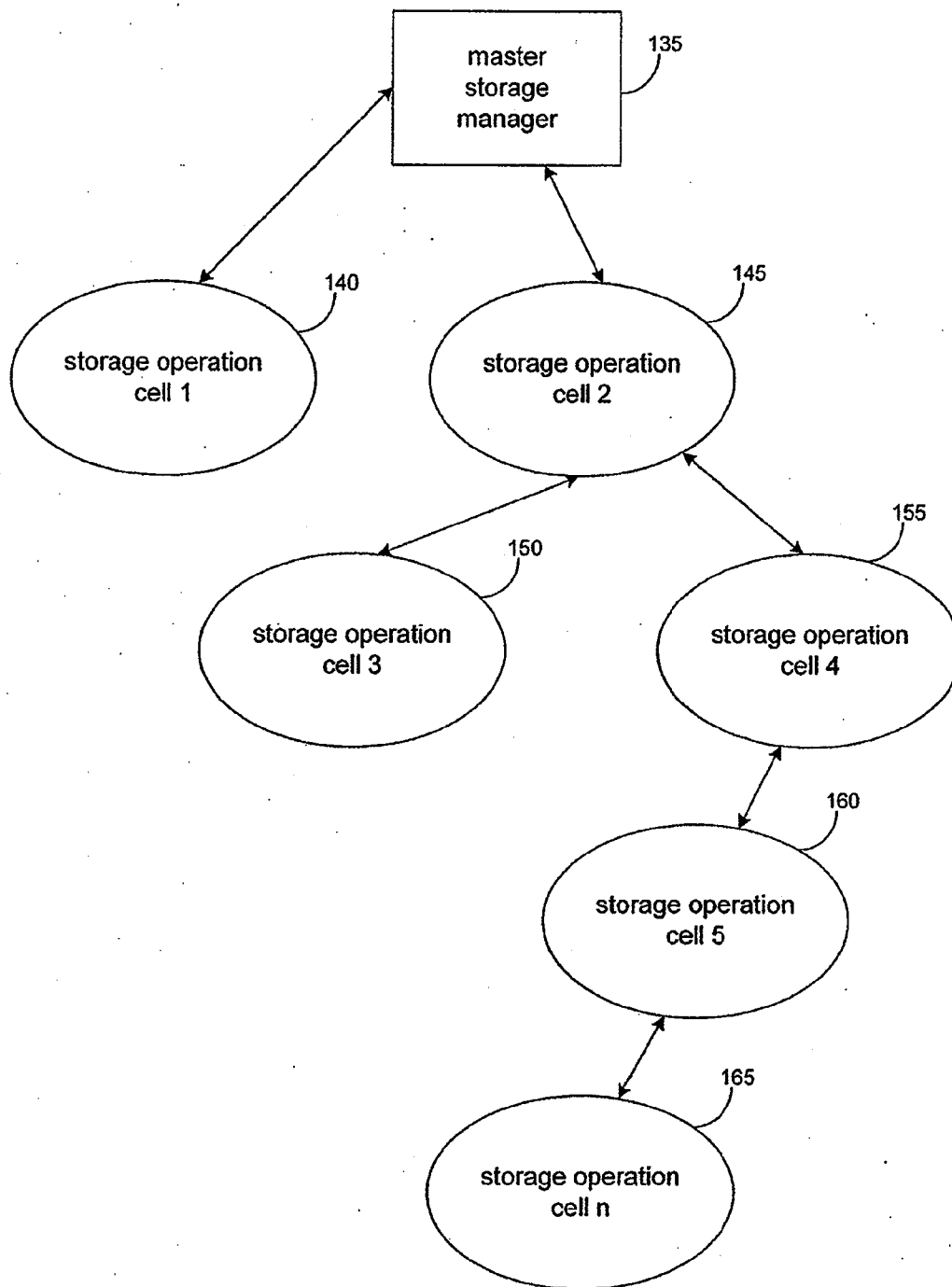


Fig. 2

**HIERARCHICAL SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR PERFORMING STORAGE OPERATIONS IN A COMPUTER NETWORK**

**RELATED APPLICATIONS**

**[0001]** This application is a continuation of U.S. Pat. No. 12/820,533, filed Jun. 22, 2010, which is a continuation of U.S. Pat. No. 12/271,677, filed Nov. 14, 2008, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/877,831, filed Jun. 25, 2004, which claims benefit of priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/482,305, filed Jun. 25, 2003, each of which is hereby incorporated herein by referenced in its entirety.

**[0002]** This application is also related to the following patents and pending applications, each of which is hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety:

**[0003]** U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/354,058, titled HIERARCHICAL BACKUP AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM, filed Jul. 15, 1999, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,395,282, issued Jul. 1, 2008;

**[0004]** U.S. Pat. No. 6,418,478, titled PIPELINED HIGH SPEED DATA TRANSFER MECHANISM, issued Jul. 9, 2002;

**[0005]** U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/610,738, titled MODULAR BACKUP AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH A STORAGE AREA NETWORK, filed Jul. 6, 2000, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,035,880, issued Apr. 25, 2006;

**[0006]** U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/774,268, titled LOGICAL VIEW AND ACCESS TO PHYSICAL STORAGE IN MODULAR DATA AND STORAGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, filed Jan. 30, 2001, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,542,972, issued Apr. 1, 2003;

**[0007]** U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/774,301, titled LOGICAL VIEW AND ACCESS TO DATA MANAGED BY A MODULAR DATA AND STORAGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, filed Jan. 30, 2001, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,658,436, issued Dec. 2, 2003;

**[0008]** U.S. patent application Ser. No. 60/409,183, titled DYNAMIC STORAGE DEVICE POOLING IN A COMPUTER SYSTEM, filed Sep. 9, 2002;

**[0009]** U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/262,556, titled METHOD FOR MANAGING SNAPSHOTS GENERATED BY AN OPERATING SYSTEM OR OTHER APPLICATION, filed Sep. 30, 2002, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,346,623, issued Mar. 18, 2008;

**[0010]** U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/416,717, titled SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MOUNTING QUICK RECOVERY VOLUMES, filed Oct. 7, 2002; and

**[0011]** U.S. patent application Ser. No. 60/460,234, SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PERFORMING STORAGE OPERATIONS IN A COMPUTER NETWORK, filed Apr. 3, 2003.

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**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

**[0013]** 1. Field of the Invention

**[0014]** The invention disclosed herein relates generally to performing storage operations on electronic data in a computer network. More particularly, the present invention relates to integrating storage-related operations for a computer network according to a specified hierarchy of storage operation cells.

**[0015]** 2. Description of the Related Art

**[0016]** Current storage management systems employ a number of different methods perform storage operations on electronic data. For example, data can be stored as a primary copy, as a snapshot copy, as a backup copy, a hierarchical storage management copy (“HSM”), as an archive copy, and as other types of copies.

**[0017]** A primary copy of data generally comprises the production copy or other “live” version of the data used by a software application and in the native format of that application. A snapshot copy generally comprises a copy of the primary copy data at a certain point in time and is usually stored on a magnetic media storage device or other readily accessible storage device.

**[0018]** A backup copy is a point-in-time copy of the primary copy data stored in a backup format as opposed to in native application format. For example, a backup copy may be stored in a backup format that is optimized for compression and efficient long-term storage.

**[0019]** An HSM copy is a copy of the primary copy data, but generally comprises only a subset of the primary copy data that meets a certain criteria and is usually stored in a format other than the native application format. For example, an HSM copy might comprise only that data from the primary copy is larger than a given size threshold or older than a given age threshold and that is stored in a backup format. Often, HSM data is removed from the primary copy, but a stub is stored in the primary copy to indicate where to locate the data. When a user requests access to the HSM data that has been removed or migrated, systems use the stub to locate the data and make recovery of the data appear transparent even though the HSM data may be stored at a location different from the remaining primary copy data.

**[0020]** An archive copy is generally similar to an HSM copy, however, the data satisfying the criteria for removal from the primary copy is generally completely removed and no stub is left in the primary copy to indicate the location where the data has been moved. Archive copies of data are generally stored in a backup format or other non-native application format.

**[0021]** Examples of various types of data and copies of data are further described in the above-referenced related applications which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety. One example of a system that performs storage operations on electronic data that produce such copies of data is the Galaxy storage management system by CommVault Systems of Oceanport, N.J.

**[0022]** The Galaxy system leverages a modular storage management architecture that includes, among other things, storage manager components, client or data agent components, and media agent components as further described in U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/460,234 which is

hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. The Galaxy system also can be hierarchically configured into backup cells to store and retrieve backup copies of electronic data as further described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/354,058, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,395,282, issued Jul. 1, 2008, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

**[0023]** While the Galaxy system offers a number of advantages over other systems, backup cells are still only hierarchically configured to perform backups of data and not directed to performing other types of storage operations. There is thus a need for systems and methods to hierarchically configure backup cells to perform other types of storage operations including snapshot copies, HSM copies, archive copies, and other types of copies of electronic data.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

**[0024]** The present invention addresses, among other things, the problems discussed above performing storage operations on electronic data in a computer network.

**[0025]** In accordance with some aspects of the present invention, a computerized system is provided for performing storage operations using hierarchically configured storage operation cells, the system comprising: a first storage manager component; and a first storage operation cell, the first storage operation cell having a second storage manager component directed to performing storage operations in the first storage operation cell; wherein the first storage manager component is programmed to instruct the second storage manager regarding performance of storage operations in the first storage operation cell.

**[0026]** In some embodiments, the first storage manager component comprises a master storage manager component. The first storage manager component may comprise a component of a storage operation cell other than the first storage operation cell or alternatively may not comprise a component of a storage operation cell.

**[0027]** In some embodiments, the first storage manager component controls the second storage manager component during performance of storage operations in the first storage operation cell. The first storage operation cell may include a media agent component and a data agent component and in some embodiments, the first storage manager component is programmed to directly control at least one of the media agent and the data agent component during performance of storage operations in the first storage operation cell. The first storage manager component may also bypass the second storage manager component to directly control at least one of the media agent or the data agent component during performance of storage operations in the first storage operation cell.

**[0028]** In some embodiments of the invention, the first storage manager component instructs the second storage manager component regarding a time to perform a storage operation or a type of storage operation to perform, such as a snapshot copy operation, an HSM copy operation, or an archive copy operation.

**[0029]** In some embodiments, the first storage operation cell is organized according to a functional criteria, such as a type of storage operation performed by the first storage operation cell. In other embodiments, the first storage operation cell is organized according to a geographic criteria, such as a physical location of one or more components of the first storage operation cell.

**[0030]** In some embodiments, the second storage manager component is programmed to communicate status informa-

tion regarding the first storage operation cell to the first storage manager component. Exemplary status information includes information regarding the availability of a component of the first storage operation cell, information regarding resource usage status by the first storage operation cell, such as usage of a storage device associated with the first storage operation cell, usage of a network pathway by components associated with the first storage operation cell, information regarding the status of one or more storage operations previously performed by the first storage operation cell, such as the status of one or more storage operations scheduled to be performed by the first storage operation cell, and other types of status information.

**[0031]** In some embodiments, the system comprises a second storage operation cell, the second storage operation cell having a third storage manager component directed to performing storage operations in the second storage operation cell, wherein the first storage manager component is programmed to instruct the third storage manager regarding performance of storage operations in the second storage operation cell. In some embodiments, the second storage manager component is also programmed to instruct the third storage manager regarding performance of storage operations in the second storage operation cell. In some embodiments, the second storage manager component is programmed to communicate status information regarding the first storage operation cell to the first storage manager component and the third storage manager component is programmed to communicate status information regarding the second storage operation cell to the first storage manager component. The first storage manager component is programmed to present a report of summary information regarding the status information communicated by the first storage operation cell and the status information communicated by the second storage operation cell.

**[0032]** In some embodiments, the second storage manager component is programmed to instruct the third storage manager regarding performance of storage operations in the second storage operation cell if a user of the second storage manager satisfies an access criteria for access to the second storage operation cell.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0033]** The invention is illustrated in the figures of the accompanying drawings which are meant to be exemplary and not limiting, in which like references are intended to refer to like or corresponding parts, and in which:

**[0034]** FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a storage operation cell in a system to perform storage operations on electronic data in a computer network according to an embodiment of the invention; and

**[0035]** FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a hierarchically organized group of storage operation cells in a system to perform storage operations on electronic data in a computer network according to an embodiment of the invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

**[0036]** With reference to FIGS. 1 through 2, embodiments of the invention are presented. FIG. 1 presents a block diagram of a storage operation cell in a system to perform storage operations on electronic data in a computer network according to an embodiment of the invention. As shown, the storage

operation cell includes a storage manager **100** and one or more of the following: a client **85**, an information store **90**, a data agent **95**, a media agent **105**, an index cache **110**, a storage device **115**, a jobs agent **120**, an interface module **125**, and a management agent **130**. The system and elements thereof are exemplary of a modular backup system such as the CommVault Galaxy backup system, available from CommVault Systems, Inc., of Oceanport, N.J., and further described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/610,738, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,035,880, issued Apr. 25, 2006, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

**[0037]** A storage operation cell generally includes combinations of hardware and software components directed to performing storage operations on electronic data. Exemplary storage operation cells according to embodiments of the invention include CommCells as embodied in the QNet storage management system and the QiNetix storage management system by CommVault Systems of Oceanport, N.J. Storage operation cells generally include a storage manager **100**, a data agent **95**, a media agent **105**, a storage device **115**, and, according to some embodiments, other components as further described herein. According to some embodiments of the invention, storage operations cells are related to backup cells and provide all of the functionality of backup cells as further described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/354,058, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,395,282, issued Jul. 1, 2008, however, storage operation cells also perform additional types of storage operations and provide other types of storage management functionality which are not generally offered by backup cells. According to embodiments of the invention, additional storage operations performed by storage operation cells include creation, storage, retrieval, and migration of primary copies, snapshot copies, backup copies, HSM copies, archive copies, and other types of copies of electronic data. In some embodiments, storage operation cells also provide an integrated management console for users or system processes to interface with to perform storage operations on electronic data as further described herein.

**[0038]** A data agent **95** is generally a software module that is generally responsible for archiving, migrating, and recovering data of a client computer **85** stored in an information store **90** or other memory location. Each client computer **85** has at least one data agent **95** and the system can support many client computers **85**. The system provides a plurality of data agents **95** each of which is intended to backup, migrate, and recover data associated with a different application. For example, different individual data agents **95** may be designed to handle Microsoft Exchange data, Lotus Notes data, Microsoft Windows 2000 file system data, Microsoft Active Directory Objects data, and other types of data known in the art.

**[0039]** If a client computer **85** has two or more types of data, one data agent **95** is generally required for each data type to archive, migrate, and restore the client computer **85** data. For example, to backup, migrate, and restore all of the data on a Microsoft Exchange 2000 server, the client computer **85** would use one Microsoft Exchange 2000 Mailbox data agent **95** to backup the Exchange 2000 mailboxes, one Microsoft Exchange 2000 Database data agent **95** to backup the Exchange 2000 databases, one Microsoft Exchange 2000 Public Folder data agent **95** to backup the Exchange 2000 Public Folders, and one Microsoft Windows 2000 File System data agent **95** to backup the client computer's **85** file

system. These data agents **95** would be treated as four separate data agents **95** by the system even though they reside on the same client computer **85**.

**[0040]** The storage manager **100** is generally a software module or application that coordinates and controls storage operations performed by the storage operation cell. The storage manager **100** communicates with all elements of the storage operation cell including client computers **85**, data agents **95**, media agents **105**, and storage devices **115**, to initiate and manage system backups, migrations, and recoveries. The storage manager **100** also communicates with other storage operation cells as further described herein.

**[0041]** The storage manager **100** includes a jobs agent **120** software module which monitors the status of all storage operations that have been performed, that are being performed, or that are scheduled to be performed by the storage operation cell. The jobs agent **120** is communicatively coupled with an interface agent **125** software module. The interface agent **125** provides presentation logic, such as a graphical user interface ("GUI"), an application program interface ("API"), or other interface by which users and system processes can retrieve information about the status of storage operations and issue instructions to the storage operations cell regarding performance of those storage operations as further described herein. For example, a user might modify the schedule of a number of pending snapshot copies or other types of copies. As another example, a user might use the GUI to view the status of all storage operation currently pending in all storage operation cells or the status of particular components in a storage operation cell.

**[0042]** The storage manager **100** also includes a management agent **130** software module. The management agent **130** generally provides an interface with other management components **100** in other storage operations cells through which information and instructions regarding storage operations may be conveyed. For example, in some embodiments as further described herein, a management agent **130** in first storage operation cell can communicate with a management agent **130** in a second storage operation cell regarding the status of storage operations in the second storage operation cell. In some embodiments, a management agent **130** in first storage operation cell can communicate with a management agent **130** in a second storage operation cell to control the storage manager **100** (and other components) of the second storage operation cell via the management agent **130** contained in the storage manager **100** for the second storage operation cell. In other embodiments, the management agent **130** in the first storage operation cell communicates directly with and controls the components in the second storage management cell and bypasses the storage manager **100** in the second storage management cell. Storage operation cells can thus be organized hierarchically as further described herein.

**[0043]** A media agent **105** is generally a software module that conducts data, as directed by the storage manager **100**, between the client computer **85** and one or more storage devices **115** such as a tape library, a magnetic media storage device, an optical media storage device, or other storage device. The media agent **105** is communicatively coupled with and controls the storage device **115**. For example, the media agent **105** might instruct the storage device **115** to use a robotic arm or other means to load or eject a media cartridge, and to archive, migrate, or restore application specific data. The media agent **105** generally communicates with the storage device **115** via a local bus such as a SCSI adaptor. In some

embodiments, the storage device **115** is communicatively coupled to the data agent **105** via a Storage Area Network (“SAN”).

**[0044]** Each media agent **105** maintain an index cache **110** which stores index data the system generates during backup, migration, and restore storage operations as further described herein. For example, storage operations for Microsoft Exchange data generate index data. Index data provides the system with an efficient mechanism for locating user files for recovery operations. This index data is generally stored with the data backed up to the storage device **115**, and the media agent **105** that controls the storage operation also writes an additional copy of the index data to its index cache **110**. The data in the media agent **105** index cache **110** is thus readily available to the system for use in storage operations and other activities without having to be first retrieved from the storage device **115**.

**[0045]** The storage manager **100** also maintains an index cache **110**. Index data is also used to indicate logical associations between components of the system, user preferences, management tasks, and other useful data. For example, the storage manager **100** might use its index cache **110** to track logical associations between media agents **105** and storage devices **115**.

**[0046]** Index caches **110** typically reside on their corresponding storage component’s hard disk or other fixed storage device. Like any cache, the index cache **110** has finite capacity and the amount of index data that can be maintained directly corresponds to the size of that portion of the disk that is allocated to the index cache **110**. In one embodiment, the system manages the index cache **110** on a least recently used (“LRU”) basis as known in the art. When the capacity of the index cache **110** is reached, the system overwrites those files in the index cache **110** that have been least recently accessed with the new index data. In some embodiments, before data in the index cache **110** is overwritten, the data is copied to an index cache **110** copy in a storage device **115**. If a recovery operation requires data that is no longer stored in the index cache **110**, such as in the case of a cache miss, the system recovers the index data from the index cache **110** copy stored in the storage device **115**.

**[0047]** In some embodiments, components of the system may reside and execute on the same computer. In some embodiments, a client computer **85** component such as a data agent **95**, a media agent **105**, or a storage manager **100** coordinates and directs local archiving, migration, and retrieval application functions as further described in application Ser. No. 09/610,738, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,035,880, issued Apr. 25, 2006. This client computer **85** component can function independently or together with other similar client computer **85** components.

**[0048]** FIG. 2 presents a block diagram of a hierarchically organized group of storage operation cells in a system to perform storage operations on electronic data in a computer network according to an embodiment of the invention. As shown, the system includes a master storage manager component **135**, a first storage operation cell **140**, a second storage operation cell **145**, a third storage operation cell **150**, a fourth storage operation cell **155**, a fifth storage operation cell **160**, and an nth storage operation cell **165**.

**[0049]** As previously described, storage operation cells are often communicatively coupled and hierarchically organized. For example, as shown in FIG. 2, a master storage manager **135** is associated with, communicates with, and directs stor-

age operations for a first storage operation cell **140**, a second storage operation cell **145**, a third storage operation cell **150**, a fourth storage operation cell **155**, a fifth storage operation cell **160**, and an nth storage operation cell **165**. In some embodiments, the master storage manager **135** is not part of any particular storage operation cell. In other embodiments (not shown), the master storage manager **135** may itself be part of a storage operation cell.

**[0050]** Thus, the master storage manager **135** communicates with the manager agent of the storage manager of the first storage operation cell **140** (or directly with the other components of the first cell **140**) regarding storage operations performed in the first storage operation cell **140**. For example, in some embodiments, the master storage manager **135** instructs the first storage operation cell **140** how and when to perform storage operations including the type of operation to perform and the data on which to perform the operation.

**[0051]** In other embodiments, the master storage manager **135** tracks the status of its associated storage operation cells, such as the status of jobs, system components, system resources, and other items, by communicating with manager agents (or other components) in the respective storage operation cells. In other embodiments, the master storage manager **135** tracks the status of its associated storage operation cells by receiving periodic status updates from the manager agents (or other components) in the respective cells regarding jobs, system components, system resources, and other items. For example, in some embodiments, the master storage manager **135** uses methods monitor network resources such as mapping network pathways and topologies to, among other things, physically monitor storage operations and suggest alternate routes for storing data as further described herein.

**[0052]** In some embodiments, the master storage manager **135** stores status information and other information regarding its associated storage operation cells and the system in an index cache or other data structure accessible to the master storage manager **135**. In some embodiments, as further described herein, the presentation interface of the master storage manager **135** accesses this information to present users and system processes with information regarding the status of storage operations, storage operation cells, system components, and other information of the system.

**[0053]** Storage operation cells may thus be organized hierarchically. Thus, storage operation cells may inherit properties from their parents or be controlled by other storage operation cells in the hierarchy. Thus, in some embodiments as shown in FIG. 2, the second storage operation cell **145** controls or is otherwise superior to the third storage operation cell **150**, the fourth storage operation cell **155**, the fifth storage operation cell **160**, and the nth storage operation cell **165**. Similarly, the fourth storage operation cell **155** controls the fifth storage operation cell **160**, and the nth storage operation cell **165**.

**[0054]** Storage operation cells may also be organized hierarchically according to criteria such as function, geography, architectural considerations, or other factors useful in performing storage operations. For example, in one embodiment, storage operation cells are organized according to types of storage operations: the first storage operation cell **140** is directed to performing snapshot copies of primary copy data, and the second storage operation cell **145** is directed to performing backup copies of primary copy data or other data. For example, in another embodiment, the first storage operation cell **140** represents a geographic segment of an enterprise,

such as a Chicago office, and a second storage operation cell **145** represents a different geographic segment, such as a New York office. In this example, the second storage operation cell **145**, the third storage operation cell **150**, the fourth storage operation cell **155**, the fifth storage operation cell **160**, and the nth storage operation cell **165** could represent departments within the New York office. Alternatively, these storage operation cells could be further divided by function performing various types of copies for the New York office or load balancing storage operations for the New York office.

**[0055]** In some embodiments, hierarchical organization of storage operation cells facilitates, among other things, system security and other considerations. For example, in some embodiments, only authorized users are allowed to access or control certain storage operation cells. For example, a network administrator for an enterprise might have access to all storage operation cells including the master storage manager **135**. But a network administrator for only the New York office, according to a previous example, might only satisfy access criteria to have access to the second storage operation cell **145**, the third storage operation cell **150**, the fourth storage operation cell **155**, the fifth storage operation cell **160**, and the nth storage operation cell **165** which comprise the New York office storage management system.

**[0056]** In some embodiments, hierarchical organization of storage operation cells facilitates storage management planning and decision-making. For example, in some embodiments, a user of the master storage manager **135** can view the status of all jobs in the associated storage operation cells of the system as well as the status of each component in every storage operation cell of the system. The user can then plan and make decisions based on this global data. For example, the user can view high-level report of summary information regarding storage operations for the entire system, such as job completion status, component availability status, resource usage status (such as network pathways, etc.), and other information. The user can also drill down through menus or use other means to obtain more detailed information regarding a particular storage operation cell or group of storage operation cells.

**[0057]** In other embodiments, the master storage manager **135** alerts the user when a particular resource is unavailable or congested. A storage device might be full or require additional media. Alternatively, a storage manager in a particular storage operation cell may be unavailable due to hardware failure, software problems, or other reasons. In some embodiments, the master storage manager **135** (or another storage manager within the hierarchy of storage operation cells) utilizes the global data regarding its associated storage operation cells at its disposal to suggest solutions to such problems when they occur or even before they occur. For example, the master storage manager **135** might alert the user that a storage device in a particular storage operation cell was full or otherwise congested, and then suggest, based on job and data storage information contained in its index cache, an alternate storage device.

**[0058]** As another example, in some embodiments the master storage manager **135** (or other network storage manager) contains programming directed to analyzing the storage patterns and resources of its associated storage operation cells and which suggests optimal or alternate methods of performing storage operations. Thus, for example, the master storage manager **135** might analyze traffic patterns to determine that snapshot data should be sent via a different network segment

or to a different storage operation cell or storage device. In some embodiments, users can direct specific queries to the master storage manager **135** regarding predicting storage operations or regarding storage operation information.

**[0059]** Systems and modules described herein may comprise software, firmware, hardware, or any combination(s) of software, firmware, or hardware suitable for the purposes described herein. Software and other modules may reside on servers, workstations, personal computers, computerized tablets, PDAs, and other devices suitable for the purposes described herein. Software and other modules may be accessible via local memory, via a network, via a browser or other application in an ASP context, or via other means suitable for the purposes described herein. Data structures described herein may comprise computer files, variables, programming arrays, programming structures, or any electronic information storage schemes or methods, or any combinations thereof, suitable for the purposes described herein. User interface elements described herein may comprise elements from graphical user interfaces, command line interfaces, and other interfaces suitable for the purposes described herein. Screenshots presented and described herein can be displayed differently as known in the art to input, access, change, manipulate, modify, alter, and work with information.

**[0060]** While the invention has been described and illustrated in connection with preferred embodiments, many variations and modifications as will be evident to those skilled in this art may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, and the invention is thus not to be limited to the precise details of methodology or construction set forth above as such variations and modification are intended to be included within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for performing storage operations using storage operation cells, the system comprising:
  - a storage manager component executing in one or more computer processors, wherein the storage manager component is configured to monitor the status of storage operations in at least first and second storage operation cells based on information received by the storage manager component,
  - wherein the storage manager component stores information indicative of hierarchical associations between the first storage operation cell and the second storage operation cell, and
  - wherein the storage manager component is configured to analyze data copy patterns of the first and second storage operation cells to suggest alternate methods of performing data copy operations wherein the storage manager component suggests data copy operations intended for the first storage operation cell be performed on the hierarchically associated second storage operation cell.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the first storage operation cell further comprises a first data agent component for obtaining application-specific data from a client device to be included in one of the data copy operations by the first storage operation cell.
3. The system of claim 2, wherein the storage manager component directly controls the first data agent component during performance of the one of the data copy operations.
4. The system of claim 2, wherein the storage manager component instructs another storage manager component to



control the first data agent component during performance of the one of the data copy operations by the first storage operation cell.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the storage manager component comprises a component of a storage operation cell other than the first storage operation cell.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein a type of the data copy operation comprises at least one of a snapshot copy, a hierarchical storage management copy and an archive copy.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the first storage operation cell comprises a higher access criteria than the second storage operation cell.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the storage manager component provides predictions of storage operations.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein a first authorized user is allowed to access the second storage operation cell, but not the first storage operation cell.

10. A method for performing storage operations using storage operation cells, the system comprising:

monitoring the status of storage operations in at least first and second storage operation cells based on information received by the storage manager component with a storage manager component executing in one or more computer processors;

storing information indicative of hierarchical associations between the first storage operation cell and the second storage operation cell; and

analyzing, with the storage manager component, data copy patterns of the first and second storage operation cells to suggest alternate methods of performing data copy operations wherein the storage manager component sug-

gests data copy operations intended for the first storage operation cell be performed on the hierarchically associated second storage operation cell.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising obtaining application-specific data from a client device to be included in one of the data copy operations by the first storage operation cell.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the storage manager component directly controls obtaining the application-specific data during performance of the one of the data copy operations.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the storage manager component instructs another storage manager component to control obtaining application-specific data during performance of the one of the data copy operations by the first storage operation cell.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the storage manager component comprises a component of a storage operation cell other than the first storage operation cell.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein a type of the data copy operation comprises at least one of a snapshot copy, a hierarchical storage management copy and an archive copy.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the first storage operation cell comprises a higher access criteria than the second storage operation cell.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the storage manager component provides predictions of storage operations.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein a first authorized user is allowed to access the second storage operation cell, but not the first storage operation cell.

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